

Get ready to see Santa on Friday

LISA CARTWRIGHT
Features

Santa Claus can't wait to see all the boys and girls at the Festival of Lights November 28.

"I try to make as many stops as possible," said Santa, who took time out of his busy schedule to speak with me.

For the past 13 years, Santa has been making the trek from the North Pole to the festival, to light the Christmas tree at the corner of Main Street and Robinson Street and to have a short visit with all the children.

"The festival is one of Santa's favourite festivals. I look forward to coming to the festival just as much as boys and girls look forward to seeing me."

After the tree lighting festival, Santa encourages all the children to follow him to his house at Old Tremont (125 Main Street).

There he will visit every child who wants to see him and give them a free candy

cane.

This year, the Rouge Valley Girl Guide Cadets will be assisting Santa. Although he will see everyone, he said he can only spend a few minutes with each child.

"Be patient because I have to see all boys and girls."

He also encourages all the

parents to bring their camera because he said he would love to have his picture taken with each child.

But, if you can't make it to see him on Friday, Santa wanted remind all the children that he will be stopping by their house on Christmas Eve.

Hayrides are a festival tradition

When you go to the Festival of Lights on November 28, don't forget to have a hayride with Murray Grove and his horses.

Grove, who has been providing hayrides at the festival almost as long as it has been in existence, brings two, two-horse teams to the festivities. This year, the hay-covered wagon, which seats about 40 people, will be pulled by either Nip and Tuck or Peggy and Delta.

The Belgian horses will be dressed in their usual finery and ready to give children a traditional winter experi-

ence.

"I like seeing the kids enjoying themselves," said Grove.

But he also worries that the children will get hurt.

"People don't see any danger, but they have to be cautious. (The horses) can be startled."

To avoid getting hurt at the festival, Grove asks the children and their parents to stand in line, don't push each other or crowd the horses.

"People should respect the horses and stay back from them," he said.

Five cent hot chocolate and famous homemade sausages available at festival

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After the ceremonies, Santa walks to his nook at the Old Tremont (125 Main Street) and each child will be able to tell him his Christmas wish.

The children will receive a free candy cane and parents will be able to take pictures.

After visiting with Santa, people can continue to browse through the shops (most merchants will be having in-store specials) and receive free treats from them.

For a small price, people can enjoy one of John Leadbetter's famous sausages or sample hot

chocolate from the Kiwanis for 5¢.

The young and the young alike can get up close to donkeys, young camels, South American llamas, Chinese chickens and more at Alex LaSalle's Petting Zoo.

Madame Buskerfly will be juggling fire, while Scrooge will be performing magic tricks for children.

A number of bands - performing Christmas music - will also be at the festival.

"Festival of Lights is hosted each year by the merchants of the village as a way to celebrate the

season with their many new and old," said Flaxman.

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